



Issue 16

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## **WIOA Advisory Committee Releases Final Report**

On September 15th, the [Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities](#) (ACICIEID) released its final report consisting of recommendations on how to bolster competitive integrated employment for youth and adults with disabilities. Chaired by David Mank, the committee was established through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. The purpose of the Committee was to prepare findings, conclusions, and recommendations for the Secretary of Labor on:

- Ways to increase employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities or other individuals with significant disabilities in competitive integrated employment (CIE);
- The use of subminimum wage through section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for the employment of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities or other individuals with significant disabilities; and

- Ways to improve oversight of the use of such certificates.

The Committee membership consisted of **18 individuals** from across the country, including both federal officials and private citizens from specific groups identified in the WIOA legislation (including leaders and experts from the disability community). During the past two years, the Committee held 10 public meetings to both discuss various topics relevant to increasing employment opportunities for individual with disabilities and to solicit pertinent testimony from disability-related stakeholders. Additionally, over the 24-month period, the Committee reported receiving more than 2,000 letters, emails, and personal video messages from people with disabilities, and other citizens and organizations across the nation that helped inform the work of the Committee and its final recommendations.

The following are some of the general recommendations from the report broken down by their established sub-categories:

- *Overall Capacity Building*
  - Create a federal interagency taskforce focused on policies to expand capacity of competitive integrated employment and advance economic self-sufficiency
  - Increase funding and initiatives to help agencies build capacity, develop national standards of professional competence, and train professionals skilled in facilitating competitive integrated employment
- *Capacity Building for Youth*
  - Increase opportunities for early work experience
  - Ensure systems integration for seamless transition
- *Capacity Building through Changes in the Use and Oversight of 14(c) Certificates*
  - Congressional amendment to the FLSA to allow for a multi-year, well-planned phase out of Section 14(c)
  - Ensure the federal government assists states with building capacity of service systems to provide CIE services as alternatives to those provided under programs using a 14(c) certificate
- *Building Capacity in the Marketplace*
  - Develop additional outreach to federal contractors regarding the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) Section 503 regulations which establish disability hiring goals
  - Increase and more effectively communicate and perform outreach to businesses
- *Capacity Building in Specific Federal Agencies*
  - Develop a policy reform initiative designed to increase the number of SSI/SSDI beneficiaries in CIE
  - Establish a cross-agency working group to provide policy guidance and technical assistance on integrated day and wraparound services that complement and maximize CIE and that advance the socioeconomic status and security of people with

disabilities

- *Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment in the AbilityOne® Program*
  - Amend the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (JWOD) to fully align the Act with modern federal disability law and policy goals by reforming the criteria for contract procurement selection and for program eligibility
  - Research the current use of AbilityOne to identify how the program is serving the target population and to determine steps for improving its ability to create CIE opportunities

For more detailed information, read the final [Advisory Committee Report](#).

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## **LEAD Center Provides Resources Following the Release of the WIOA Final Rules**

On August 19, the Departments of Labor (DOL) and Education (ED) collectively published their Joint Final Rule to implement jointly-administered activities authorized under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Through this Joint WIOA Final Rule, these two federal agencies implement workforce education and employment system reforms, and strengthen the nation's public workforce development system, to provide increased economic opportunity and make the United States more competitive in the 21st century evolving labor market.

This Joint WIOA Final Rule provides guidance for state and local workforce development systems that increase the skill and credential attainment, employment, retention, and earnings of participants, especially those with significant barriers to employment (which includes individuals with disabilities), thereby improving the quality of the workforce, reducing dependency on benefits, increasing economic opportunity, and enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the nation.

In an effort to help relevant stakeholders better understand how the Final Rule affects youth and adults with disabilities, the LEAD Center has developed materials in the form of two briefs detailing the Final Rule from a disability perspective: [Summary Description from a Disability Perspective: FINAL RULE Implementing Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(Workforce Development Systems\)](#) and [Summary Description of FINAL RULE Implementing Title I of the Rehabilitation Act \(State Vocational Rehabilitation\), as Amended by Title IV OF WIOA](#).

In July, the LEAD Center conducted a national webinar, *Implementing the WIOA Final Rule (Title I) from a Disability Perspective: What Workforce Professionals and Partners Need to Know*, which included comprehensive information directly from DOL and ED leaders, inviting stakeholders from across the country to learn more about how the Final Rule can help job seekers with disabilities gain meaningful employment.

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## **LEAD Center: Promoting Disability Policy at Multiple National Conferences**

The LEAD Center had a presence at three conferences this summer, with a focus on sharing emerging best practices in disability policy.

### ***2016 Annual Conference on Independent Living - July 25-28, 2016, hosted by the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)***

*Washington, D.C.*

The LEAD Center sponsored an exhibit booth at the [2016 Annual Conference on Independent Living](#) to provide information and resources designed to enhance integrated employment and promote economic advancement for youth and adults with disabilities, including the [Promoting Employment and Economic Advancement: A Toolkit for CILs and AJCs](#). This year's conference, hosted by the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), drew more than 1,000 directors and staff from Centers for Independent Living, policy makers, and people with disabilities and their families.

### ***2016 Reinventing Quality Conference - July 31 - August 2, 2016***

*Baltimore, MD*

The LEAD Center's Project Director, Dr. Rebecca Salon, was invited to conduct a workshop on [Conversion Strategies: Changing Business Models, Practices, and Building System Capacity](#) at the [2016 Reinventing Quality Conference](#). Dr. Salon's session highlighted the opportunities that WIOA creates for building system capacity through partnerships. She discussed critical partnerships including leveraging and braiding resources and resource coordination across systems (e.g., Medicaid/DD, Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce, Education, Ticket to Work, community sources). Dr. Salon emphasized that partners all benefit from collaboration and the introduction of promising practices. The LEAD Center also hosted an exhibit booth to share important LEAD Center activities and resources, which attracted hundreds of attendees.

The Reinventing Quality Conference is jointly hosted by the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS), Research and Training Center on Community Living at the University of Minnesota, Human Services Research Institute (HSRI), University of Delaware National Leadership Consortium, American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), and TASH. The biennial conference draws hundreds of community service providers; state agency employees from vocational rehabilitation, developmental disabilities and behavioral health systems; university faculty and researchers; school transition staff; and people with disabilities and their families to disseminate and discuss "best practice" information on individualized, person-centered supports, and related quality management activities.

### ***National Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Conference - August 29 - September 1st***

*Washington, D.C.*

LEAD Center staff presented and exhibited at the National Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Conference, a gathering of 1,300 federal, state, and local policymakers and those who administer, manage, and deliver waiver and other HCBS programs. The conference always sees a strong presence from U.S. Health and Human Services leadership including the Administration for Community Living, the Administration on Aging and Administration on Disabilities; Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS); Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and other federal agencies.

A LEAD Center exhibit booth provided information on emerging best practices and policies related to the HCBS Final Rule, including the provision for Control of Personal Resources. Staff provided information on the critical role of service providers in strengthening a person's financial capability, shared ways to integrate financial education and empowerment into service planning and delivery, and discussed opportunities for improving collaboration with non-disability financial capability partners.

Dr. Rebecca Salon, LEAD Center Project Director; Elizabeth Jennings, Assistant Project Director; and Brittany Taylor, Project Coordinator, held a workshop on *Successful Employment: Partnering with the Workforce System to Achieve Employment Outcomes*. The session provided participants with useful information about partnership opportunities and resources available to them through the workforce system, opening doors through American Job Centers (AJC) to employment. Participants were introduced to effective LEAD Center approaches to integrating Customized Employment through partnerships into AJCs using Guided Group Discovery (GGD) and Self-Guided Discovery (SGD) approaches. Customized employment has been shown to increase programmatic accessibility and outcomes for people with disabilities and others with barriers to employment. All three presenters emphasized that WIOA brings a heightened emphasis on including people with disabilities so that they can receive support from AJCs in addition to services they receive from other systems. Jennings also shared strategies and resources to support economic advancement and control of personal resources for people with disabilities, including people receiving Medicaid-funded long-term supports and services.

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## **NEW DOLETA TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT NOTICE (TEN): Promoting Employment & Economic Advancement - A Toolkit for CILs & AJCs**

On July 27, 2016, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) issued a TEN to provide information about opportunities for increased collaboration between Centers for Independent Living (CIL) and American Job Centers (AJC) to improve employment outcomes for job seekers with disabilities.

With the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014, new partnerships and strategies have emerged to fortify the public workforce investment system's

capacity to ensure full inclusion of job seekers with disabilities. CILs are established in every state and territory across the U.S. and operated within each local community by individuals with disabilities. CILs maximize the independence of individuals with all types of disabilities through advocacy, independent living skills training, information/referral, and peer counseling. Under WIOA, CILs are also required to provide a fifth core service around transition that includes the relocation of individuals from nursing homes and other institutions to community-based residences to avoid institutional placement, and the transition of youth with significant disabilities after completion of secondary education to postsecondary education, employment and/or independent living. By offering these targeted services across the country, CILs are well-positioned to support multiple aspects of WIOA implementation at the state and local level by sharing expertise and experiences in supporting the broad spectrum of people with disabilities.

Several fundamental ways that CILs can strengthen collaboration with AJCs include offering their personal and professional experience in disability awareness, physical and program accessibility, and reasonable accommodations under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). CILs can also be an asset to workforce professionals in understanding, procuring, and utilizing assistive technology to help boost employment opportunities for job seekers with disabilities. In addition, CILs may assist AJCs to better support job seekers receiving services concurrently or sequentially from more than one service provider, such as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Overall, CILs can help debunk any misperceptions that exist in the workforce investment system and business sector to reach better employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

In order to promote more effective collaboration between AJCs and CILs, resources and guidance have been composed by the National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities (LEAD), funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). This information has been collected in a toolkit, *Promoting Employment and Economic Advancement: A Toolkit for CILs and AJCs*, available on the LEAD website. Embedded throughout the Toolkit are suggested opportunities and recommendations for CIL and AJC collaboration toward improved opportunities in employment and economic self-sufficiency for job seekers with disabilities. Checklists, guides, and best practices are also outlined that leverage both CILs' knowledge and skills on disability issues and community resources, as well as AJCs' training and employment services to maximize the employment of job seekers with disabilities.

Find a CIL in your local community: <http://www.ilru.org/html/publications/directory/index.html>.

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## **Financial Integration Team - A Community of Practice of Economic Advancement Change Agents**

Communities of Practice (CoPs) align individuals with a shared interest to share common practices, individual experiences, innovative ideas, and experiential knowledge. Benefits of CoPs

include the opportunity to connect for peer support, knowledge building, and for sharing successful practices and problem solving strategies. The LEAD Center is supporting a new CoP, the ***Financial Integration Team (FIT)***, which focuses specifically on integrated economic advancement services to support persons with disabilities. This CoP is a peer-to-peer support network made up of diverse organizations from across the country who share a common interest in the integration of economic advancement strategies within their organization, system, and/or city.

*FIT* members include the following disability and asset building organizations from nine cities:

- CareerSource Broward – Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
- The Arc of Broward – Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
- ServiceSource – Northern Virginia
- Capital Area Asset Builders – Washington, D.C.
- Washington Access Fund – Seattle, Washington
- Cares of Washington – Seattle, Washington
- United Way of Tompkins County – Ithaca, New York
- LIFE, Inc. – St. Louis/Farmington, Missouri
- ServiceSource – Delaware
- Department of Rehabilitation Services – Hartford, Connecticut
- Louisville Alliance for Development through Diversity, Empowerment, and Resources (LADDER) – Louisville, Kentucky

*FIT* members receive monthly technical assistance provided by subject matter experts on integrated services for persons with disabilities, financial education, financial coaching, asset development, and public benefits. Members utilize an online secured portal to communicate with their CoP peers, access training materials, and report on outcomes. Each area is completing a community resource map of key local resources (and connections) and an analysis of customer flow to identify specific touchpoints to include economic advancement strategies such as the completion of a financial health assessment, financial education, and/or financial coaching. Each member will track their work with select individuals with disabilities to document outcomes and identify successful practices.

The *FIT* furthers the LEAD Center’s work with the [Louisville Alliance for Development through Diversity, Empowerment, and Resources \(LADDER\)](#) and supports on-the-ground efforts to identify and implement [strategies to integrate financial literacy into the workforce development system](#).

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## **October Is National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

The official theme of the U.S. Department of Labor, [Office of Disability Employment Policy’s](#)

(ODEP) National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) in October is [“#InclusionWorks.”](#)

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is a nationwide campaign observed each October that raises awareness about disability employment issues, celebrates the skills and talents of workers with disabilities, and educates about the value of a diverse workforce.

ODEP offers a range of [resources](#) to help organizations plan NDEAM observances, including official posters in English and Spanish, as well as sample articles, a press release, proclamation, and social media content.

NDEAM dates back to 1945, when Congress declared the first week in October "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." The word "physically" was deleted in 1962 to acknowledge individuals across the spectrum of disabilities. The week was expanded to a month by Congress in 1988 and its name changed to National Disability Employment Awareness Month. When ODEP was created in 2001, it was given responsibility for NDEAM, including the selection of its annual theme.

NDEAM can and should continue beyond October. The Department of Labor lists 10 activities that employers can engage in to advance disability inclusion throughout the year. Visit the [DOL webpage](#) and learn how to keep the momentum going.

For more information about NDEAM, including a [free downloadable poster in English or Spanish](#), and specific ideas on how different types of organizations can participate in the month-long observance, visit <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/>.

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## **Missouri Workforce Development Collaborates with Vocational Rehabilitation & the LEAD Center on NEW Section 188 Statewide Staff Training**

In September, Missouri’s Division of Workforce Development launched a new statewide training series highlighting disability under Section 188 nondiscrimination and equal opportunity of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). While the state’s Equal Opportunity Unit has developed and facilitated the training series, the State Vocational Rehabilitation and LEAD Center have been working in partnership to offer expertise and best practices in achieving universal access and equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities.

Through this new training opportunity, Missouri workforce professionals will gain a stronger understanding of Section 188 under WIOA which prohibits discrimination against individuals who apply to, participate in, work for, or come into contact with programs and activities that receive financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), including partners that are part of the American Job Centers (AJC) system. Although the focus of the training is on disability, AJC staff will learn universal practices under Section 188 that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or political affiliation or belief, among other bases.



As part of the training, workforce staff throughout Missouri will view the three-part webinar series in a group setting with other workforce professionals to allow for questions and discussion with their local Equal Opportunity Officers (EOO). Each training corresponds with a section of the U.S. DOL's *Promising Practices in Achieving Universal Access and Equal Opportunity: A Section 188 Disability Reference Guide*. The Reference Guide provides promising practices that promote equal access for individuals with disabilities in the AJC system. The Guide is divided into three sections: 1) Promising practices related to AJCs taking appropriate steps to ensure universal access to programs and activities for all eligible individuals, including individuals with disabilities; 2) Promising practices related to AJCs ensuring equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that includes providing reasonable accommodations, effective communication, and administering programs in the most integrated setting appropriate; and 3) Promising practices related to compliance requirements of the equal opportunity unit in monitoring, continuous improvement; complaint resolution, and corrective action. The guide was developed jointly by DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy's (ODEP), Employment and Training Administration (ETA), Civil Rights Center (CRC) and LEAD Center.

Key themes in effectively serving job seekers with disabilities in the Missouri workforce system will be emphasized throughout the training, along with scenarios and solutions that staff may experience and apply. Topics include the role and responsibilities of staff in providing accommodations to job seekers with disabilities; critical engagement of partners such as vocational rehabilitation (VR) in co-serving job seekers with multiple resource needs; and knowing trusted resources and partners to go to for support to reach more positive employment outcomes for job seekers with disabilities.

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## LEAD Center Year 4 Highlights

**As LEAD Center finishes its fourth year as a national training and technical assistance center, we wanted to provide our top 10 accomplishments in Year 4. They include a focus on:**

1. **WIOA from a Disability Perspective:** LEAD Center continued to be the "go-to" source to get timely information on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) from a disability perspective. LEAD Center published a review of 10 state unified or combined state plans to highlight how different systems address the needs of people who face barriers to employment, including people with disabilities; two guides for reviewing unified or combined state plans to ensure that they support the inclusion of people with disabilities; summaries of Title I and Title IV requirements to support the inclusion of people with disabilities in proposed rules; summary descriptions of the Department of Labor and Department of Education Final Rules implementing Titles I and IV of the

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (Workforce Development System and Vocational Rehabilitation respectively); and a webinar series highlighting requirements, as well as examples of promising practices from people working in the workforce development system.

2. **Customized Employment:** LEAD Center's focus on Customized Employment (CE) continued, with LEAD's expansion of CE pilots in three locations in Tennessee and a number of settings in Philadelphia, which included community partners from the developmental disability (DD) and homelessness systems, in addition to workforce and vocational rehabilitation partners. LEAD also supported Self-Guided Discovery pilots in three states, promoting partnerships between the workforce system, vocational rehabilitation, community employment providers, and partners from other systems (e.g., developmental disabilities, behavioral health, community college, Centers for Independent Living, etc.).
3. **CIL-AJC Toolkit:** LEAD Center created and released a toolkit to promote collaboration between Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and American Job Centers (AJC), *Promoting Employment and Economic Advancement: A Toolkit for Centers for Independent Living (CIL) and American Job Centers (AJC)*, produced in collaboration with CILs, the National Center for Independent Living (NCIL) and AJCs.
4. **Equal Opportunity in the Workforce System:** LEAD Center continued its work to promote the implementation of Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), promoting equal opportunity (EO) for job seekers accessing the workforce development system. LEAD has been working closely with the State Equal Opportunity Officer in Missouri to create a statewide EO Practice Network, which has surveyed workforce staff, employers and job seekers about their experiences related to services for people with disabilities. Based on what they learned, the EO Practice Network created two training series, one for managers and one for workforce; they have been recognized for their work and accomplishments. LEAD Center also began replication work in Virginia during Year 4.
5. **Financial Inclusion:** The City of Louisville (KY) continued to increase financial inclusion in partnership with LEAD Center. Their network, the Louisville Alliance for Development through Diversity, Empowerment and Resources (LADDER) works to create a community-wide culture of financial inclusiveness and accessibility that serves the diverse Louisville metro population. LADDER is implementing a financial health assessment and created an online Financial Capability Toolkit for Workforce Development, which can be used in the workforce system and through its partners. This initiative sparked the development of

the **Financial Integration Team (FIT)**, a broad-based community of practice that focuses specifically on integrated economic advancement services to support persons with disabilities through partners across the country.

6. **Employment First:** In collaboration with ODEP, LEAD Center promoted Employment First through the release of four [Employment First Technical Briefs](#) and the launch of a comprehensive [Employment First web portal](#) with specific information on all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The web portal is designed to share information on state policies, practices, technical assistance initiatives, and outcomes that focus directly or indirectly on the employment of people with disabilities.
7. **Knowledge Translation:** Knowledge Translation (KT) has always been a focus of LEAD Center's work. This year, LEAD Center presented on WIOA implementation, financial literacy, and more at the national conferences of the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP), NAWDP's Youth Conference, the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), TASH, APSE, the Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity, the National Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Conference, Reinventing Quality, and the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL). LEAD Center also convened its Knowledge Translation (KT) Consortium to discuss WIOA implementation and the recommendations of the WIOA Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities (ACICIEID). The KT Consortium brings together federally-funded Training and Technical Assistance Centers, each with their own unique mission addressing different aspects of employment, career readiness and development, and transition and accessibility for youth and adults with disabilities.
8. **Redesigned Website:** Given the robust resources on the LEAD Center's website related to WIOA from a disability perspective, customized employment, Employment First, policy updates, financial literacy/capability, and more, the LEAD Center website was redesigned to ensure that users can easily find the resources they seek. The redesigned website structure and its user-friendly search functions make it easy to find resources on any of its topic areas - and to provide workforce development professionals and their partners with a single website where they can find the resources they need.
9. **Employment, Health Care and Disability (EHD) Updates:** LEAD Center published 10 EHD updates, in collaboration with the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN). These updates focus on the intersection of disability, employment, and health care policy. The LEAD Center's policy updates provide policymakers, disability service professionals, and individuals with disabilities and their families with information about relevant policy

developments regarding Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act and related topics, with a focus on improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

10. **Collaborations on Financial Literacy:** LEAD Center collaborated with the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) at the Department of Labor, the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) at the Department of Education, and others to build disability-accessible resources for workforce development professionals and adult educators about financial literacy to advance economic self-sufficiency, and as a needed complement to creating career pathways.

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## Important New Resources

- National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2016
- Bridging the Employment Gap for Students with Disabilities
- Policy Update - Employment, Health Care and Disability: August 30, 2016
- Summary Description from a Disability Perspective: FINAL RULE Implementing Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (Workforce Development Systems)
- Summary Description of FINAL RULE Implementing Title I of the Rehabilitation Act (State Vocational Rehabilitation), as amended by Title IV OF WIOA
- Veterans.gov
- Policy Update - Employment, Health Care and Disability: June 29, 2016

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